

Figures released by the Treasury Department show that retail sales of firearms and ammunition rose by almost 3 percent in 2005. All told, 4.7 million new guns were sold during this past year. Yet government figures and independent statistics revealed that firearm crimes and accidental fatalities, including among youth, all trend downward.

A recent assault on the Mall, ironically involving one of the Capitol Police chief's children who was one of the victims, underscores the importance of making guns available to law-abiding citizens in Washington, DC.

Residents here deserve the same self-defense measures that we do in our individual States. The second amendment applies to all Americans, not just some. It does not take a constitutional scholar to figure that out.

Mr. Speaker, anti-gun activists attacking our second amendment rights are perpetuating a myth of more guns equals more violence. It is not true.

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STOP GLOBAL WARMING

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, last week, the President of the Marshall Islands visited Bainbridge Island, Washington. In discussions with me he made a specific plea. He asked America and the U.S. Congress to finally do something about global warming. The reason he said that is that rising sea levels literally could drown his entire nation.

He basically told me that his entire nation could become the first nation state to be environmental refugees, and he said, you know, we don't hardly put any carbon dioxide in the air. You put 25 percent of all the carbon dioxide in the world into the air, and your Congress does nothing. I think he had a pretty good point.

While the science of global warming becomes unambiguous and inarguable and clear, this Congress has lined the pockets of the oil and gas companies with giant subsidies and done absolutely nothing about global warming. It is a tragedy.

You know, we have had a lot of Republicans historically to stand up for the environment, such as Teddy Roosevelt; Bill Ruckelshaus, who met with us yesterday, who said do something about global warming. We need some action instead of passivity.

U.S. FLAG MUST BE PROTECTED

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is Flag Day, and I rise in support of the Flag Protection Amendment. February 23, 1945, after surviving the bloodiest bat-

tle since Gettysburg, a platoon of marines trudged up Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima with a simple task, to raise the American flag above the devastation below.

When the flag was raised by SGT Mike Strank and his platoon, history records that a thunderous cheer rose from our troops on land and on sea and in foxholes and on stretchers. By adopting the Flag Protection Amendment, we will raise Old Glory again.

We will raise her above the decisions of a judiciary that were wrong in the law and the history of our values. We will raise her above the cynicism of our time. Out of respect for those who served beneath it and those who died within the sight of it, we must say that there are boundaries necessary to the survival of freedom.

Let us pass the flag amendment and restore to Old Glory the modest protection of the law that she represents.

HOUSE GOP IGNORES THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF AMERICA'S MIDDLE CLASS

(Mr. MEEKS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, the House Republican Do-Nothing Congress refuses to do anything to address the economic conditions that have led to large majorities of middle class Americans feeling squeezed to make ends meet.

Since taking control of both the White House and the Congress 5 years ago, Republicans have chosen to focus their attention on America's wealthiest, claiming the benefits would trickle down to the middle class. Well, Mr. Speaker, the American people have waited for 5 years, and they have not seen any results.

Instead, they see a monthly paycheck today that is not much different than the one we received back in 2001. While their wages have stagnated a lot of their monthly costs have increased dramatically. Housing costs are at their highest levels in 14 years. Health care costs for the average family have increased more than \$1,200. College tuition is up 40 percent and gas prices have doubled. The middle class is indeed squeezed, and yet they are getting no help from the Republican Congress that chooses to listen only to the wealthiest few.

Mr. Speaker, House Democrats are ready to take America in a new direction. We will start by listening to all of our constituents, not just the wealthy elite.

IRAQ AND THE WAR ON TERROR

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank our brave servicemen

and women for their exceptional work in fighting the global war on terror.

I recently spent time in Iraq with the 48th Brigade Combat Unit of the Georgia Army National Guard. This unit was doing some incredible humanitarian work for the Iraqi people, building schools and managing health clinics. Of course, these aren't the stories that you read about on the front page of the New York Times, so I want to share one with you today.

One evening during my trip, I was having dinner with a young sergeant named Keith Weathers. This sergeant would explain to me why his unit was doing so much to help the Iraqi people. Sergeant Weathers said it was because he and most Americans have hope and opportunity, and it was his mission to share the abundant opportunities our Nation enjoys with those struggling to achieve freedom in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, our soldiers are bringing hope and opportunity for the Iraqi people every day. The war on terror is not an easy fight, nor is it an expedient fight, but it is undoubtedly the right fight.

I hope we all take Sergeant Weathers's words to heart and continue supporting our troops and their mission.

MINIMUM WAGE AMENDMENT

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Ladies and gentlemen, the American people want a new direction. And Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House Appropriations Committee finally acted on something that the House Republican leadership has refused to address for over a decade.

Finally, yesterday, the full Appropriations Committee passed the amendment to the Labor, Health and Human Services appropriations bill that will very gradually increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25. Do you know that those who were working at the minimum wage in 1968, if today they were getting a comparable compensation, it would be over \$9 an hour.

I commend the Appropriations Committee for passing this in a bipartisan fashion, because expanding economic opportunity for over 7 million hard-working wage earners, plus another approximately 9 million members of their family should not be a partisan issue.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership has said they do not intend to allow us to vote on the House floor on this critical issue. Today's minimum wage is at its lowest level in 50 years. Let's change that for America's hardest working families.

PRISON FELLOWSHIP

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)